

## Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Monitoring the Implementation of Property Master Plans

**Property:** Lower Chippewa River Properties

**Master Plan Year:** 2010

### Land Management – general management objectives

#### **MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES**

- Where possible, manage for larger blocks of habitat and a continuum of habitats from lowland to upland.
- Establish and maintain linkages between habitat blocks to create travel corridors for the movement of species over time.
- Maintain, restore, and enhance grasslands and oak savannas at a landscape scale with an emphasis on native communities.
- Maintain and enhance the quality and extent of open wetlands, with particular emphasis placed on wet and wet-mesic prairie, sedge meadow, emergent marsh.
- Maintain existing shrub-carr wetland in areas that do not have high potential for management as sedge meadow, wet prairie, or wet mesic prairie.
- Maintain the extent and quality of bottomland hardwood, swamp hardwood stands, and southern tamarack swamp.
- Maintain the health, vigor and diversity of central hardwood stands to provide wildlife habitat and aesthetic values.
- For wildlife habitat value, maintain, enhance, and expand oak stands and retain aspen stands wherever practicable and consistent with management objectives for the management.
- Maintain the limited native jack and white pine cover type on these properties.
- Gradually phase out conifer plantations over time.
- Convert most cropped land to native cover types.
- Where feasible, identify and eradicate populations of invasive species by cutting, pulling, burning, herbicide treatment and/or bio-control.

<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b></p>	<p>For detailed descriptions of accomplishments, see the property specific sections of this report.</p> <p>General accomplishments across the range of properties include management of large blocks of habitat on the Tiffany and Dunnville Wildlife Areas as well as Nine Mile Island State Natural Area. Extensive timber harvests took place on the Tiffany and Dunnville Wildlife Areas to create travel corridors and open landscapes, promoting native community development. These harvests enhanced existing oak openings and savannas while also preserving and enhancing existing jack and white pine remnants. Nearly half of an 80 acre red pine plantation on the Dunnville Wildlife Area was removed as the area undergoes the transition from plantation to oak and pine barrens. Also, 27 acres of sharecropped land in the Dunnville Wildlife Area was converted to native prairie.</p>
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### **Recreation Management – general use objectives**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide high quality hunting, trapping, and fishing opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for non-hunting related recreational activities, such as hiking, un-tracked cross country skiing, wildlife viewing, nature study, berry picking, canoeing, and canoe/camping when compatible with the property's capabilities and the primary management objective.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b></p>	<p>For detailed descriptions of accomplishments, see the property specific sections of this report.</p> <p>Generally, this assemblage of properties remains open to all types of public recreation as described in the Master Plan. The addition of allowed camping on the sand bars associated with State owned lands along the Chippewa River has been popular with canoeists, with numerous questions and requests responded to in the past year.</p>

**Property:** Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area

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### **Resource management, development and protection**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain the floodplain forest, floodplain savanna and prairie habitat for rare and special concern species and to provide opportunities for research, education, and ecological interpretation. Keep block size as large as possible.</li><li>▪ Restore agricultural lands to floodplain forest, savanna, prairie, or wetlands as soil type, elevation, surrounding cover-type, current conditions and historical records indicate.</li><li>▪ Protect the Chippewa and Red Cedar Rivers.</li><li>▪ Maintain a continuum of habitats from lowland to upland wherever possible.</li><li>▪ Maintain the river corridor as an important travel corridor for various species.</li><li>▪ Control invasive species.</li><li>▪ Continue to acquire lands to reach the acreage goal.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Active management on the scattered Lower Chip SNA parcels was limited to primarily prescribed burning in 2012, with 22 acres of restored prairie burned.</li><li>- An attempt to purchase a 28 acre parcel on the Chippewa River proved unsuccessful. Although an offer had been accepted by the sellers, the NRB felt access was insufficient and denied the purchase.</li></ul>

### **Public use management and development**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain 6 parking areas.</li><li>▪ Develop parking areas on new acquisitions as needed.</li><li>▪ Maintain primitive service roads.</li><li>▪ Consider partial closure of Fuller road (1010th street) as lands are acquired.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Six parking lots have been maintained through a combination of mowing, grading, fence maintenance, and posting.</li><li>- Approval to construct 2 new parking lots was granted, with funding provided by the conservation infrastructure fund. These lots will be located off of County Hwy H and 1010<sup>th</sup> St., both in Dunn County. While design work occurred in 2012, construction will take place in the spring of 2013.</li></ul>

**Property:** Tiffany Wildlife Area

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## **Resource management, development and protection**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Manage and maintain aspen and native shrub species.</li><li>▪ Regenerate oak (along with other mid-successional tree species) in order to maintain the species within oak-dominated or mixed cover types. Improve the oak age class distribution for long-term sustainability of the species.</li><li>▪ Manage for a diversity of age class and forest structure.</li><li>▪ Maintain aesthetic buffers along the river corridor.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identified areas with invasive species and initiated control by cutting and herbicide treatment.</li></ul>

## **Native Community Management Area - Five Mile Bluff Prairie/Wood**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain and expand prairie and open oak woodland within the management area to provide habitat for native plant and animal species.</li><li>▪ Begin to develop structural and functional attributes of old forests including biologically mature trees, large diameter trees and large snags and coarse woody debris.</li><li>▪ Provide closed canopy or near closed canopy to benefit area sensitive species.</li><li>▪ Develop aesthetic qualities of old forest habitat.</li><li>▪ Protect scenic and aesthetic qualities of the Chippewa River.</li><li>▪ Consider habitat requirements for bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need, which are found in these uplands, when conducting management prescriptions.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expanded bluff prairie by cutting and herbicide treatment of encroaching trees and brush.</li><li>- Fire breaks have been installed for a prescribed burn in spring of 2013. This burn includes the bluff prairie and woodland on the adjacent South West slope. A prescribed burn is projected to benefit numerous species of birds, reptiles, and invertebrates.</li></ul>

## **Native Community Management Areas – Floodplain Prairie and Savanna, and Floodplain Forests and Wetlands**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<p><b>Floodplain Prairie and Savanna Management Area</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand and maintain the floodplain savanna and prairie habitat for rare, special concern and common species.</li> <li>▪ Maintain floodplain forest.</li> <li>▪ Maintain a continuum of habitats from lowland to upland wherever possible.</li> <li>▪ Maintain the river corridor as an important travel corridor for various species.</li> <li>▪ Control invasive species.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for research, education, and ecological interpretation.</li> <li>▪ Protect scenic and aesthetic qualities of the Chippewa River.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timber harvest on 90 acres of mixed oak forest for enhancement and creation of savanna. A whole tree harvester was utilized to limit the amounts of slash and allow future prescribed burning. Prescribed fire will continue to be a primary management tool in managing existing prairies and savannas as well as in the conversion of the savanna restoration areas.</li> <li>- Herbicide treatment of the regrowth within the timber sale to allow sunlight to reach the desired prairie plants.</li> <li>- Identified areas with invasive species and initiated control by cutting and herbicide treatment.</li> </ul>

## **Native Community Management Areas – Floodplain Prairie and Savanna, and Floodplain Forests and Wetlands**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<b>Floodplain Forest and Wetlands Management Area (passive)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain and develop structural and functional attributes of old forests including biologically mature trees, large diameter trees, large snags and coarse woody debris.</li> <li>▪ Provide closed canopy or near closed canopy to benefit area sensitive species.</li> <li>▪ Develop aesthetic qualities of old forest habitat.</li> <li>▪ Protect scenic and aesthetic qualities of the Chippewa River.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identified areas with invasive species and initiated control by cutting and herbicide treatment.</li> </ul>

## **Native Community Management Areas – Floodplain Prairie and Savanna, and Floodplain Forests and Wetlands**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<b>Floodplain Forest and Wetlands Management Area (active)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain at least 50 % in mature forest with closed canopy or near closed canopy in large blocks to minimize habitat fragmentation.</li> <li>▪ Maintain floodplain forest to improve the age class distribution for long term sustainability of floodplain forest species.</li> <li>▪ Develop old forest attributes through natural processes and active management that mimics natural disturbance.</li> <li>▪ Silvicultural and other management activities must attempt to avoid the introduction and/or spread of invasives (especially reed canary grass) in the understory of this community.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passive management of forests to minimize habitat fragmentation.</li> <li>- Identified areas with invasive species and initiated control by cutting and herbicide treatment.</li> </ul>

## **Public use management and development**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain 12 existing parking areas and 4 boat landing/parking areas on the property's periphery.</li><li>▪ Maintain a gated primitive service road from the Hwy 35 Landing to Thibodeau Road parking lot.</li><li>▪ Maintain the gated primitive service roads within the Pepin County portion of the Tiffany WA.</li><li>▪ Develop a 1.5 mile gated primitive service road entering the property near Misha Mokwa.</li><li>▪ Maintain an existing scenic overlook along County Road N near Dead Lake.</li><li>▪ Continue inland camping using the permit system.</li></ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 14 parking areas and 4 primitive boat landings were maintained through mowing and litter removal.</li><li>- Maintained a primitive road system. The road system is also used extensively by recreationalists to access various parts of the property.</li><li>- Camping permits were issued to various recreation user groups.</li></ul>

**Property:** Dunnville Wildlife Area

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## **Resource management, development and protection**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain and enhance grasslands/savanna and increase block size to benefit grassland dependent species.</li><li>▪ Convert agricultural lands to appropriate natural cover types.</li><li>▪ Wild Rice management may occur in some wetlands including the planting of harvested seed.</li><li>▪ Maintain floodplain forest to improve the age class distribution for long term sustainability of floodplain forest species.</li></ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Maintaining and enhancing grasslands and savannas with a focus on increasing block size was the primary management activity that took place on Dunnville in 2012. A combination of timber harvest techniques cleared approximately 200 acres of woods to connect areas of similar habitat while converting the affected areas to oak savanna. A conventional timber harvest aided in the conversion of roughly 100 acres of savanna on the east end of Dunnville, while a wood chip harvest operation completed a similar project on the west end of the property. These sales will require extensive follow-up maintenance to minimize brushy regrowth, but with diligent maintenance, the area will be successfully converted.</li><li>- A 27 acre site on the property's east side was removed from agricultural production and converted to prairie in order to compliment the surrounding prairie and savanna landscape.</li><li>- A 35 acre site on the property's east side was put into farm production as a maintenance tool to rid the site of undesirable weeds and brush. The site will remain in production for 3-5 years before being converted back to prairie.</li><li>- Prescribed burning took place on 5 units totaling 627 acres. These burns successfully invigorated prairie stands while also stunting brush growth. Prescribed fire will continue to be a primary management tool in managing existing prairies and savannas as well as in the conversion of the aforementioned savanna restoration areas.</li></ul>



## **Native Community Management Area – Floodplain Terrace Prairies and Wetlands**

<p><b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor for oak wilt and promote conversion to oak barrens in affected areas.</li> <li>▪ Maintain and increase jack pine/barrens for native plants and animals where soil conditions and cover type deem appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Phase out red pine plantations.</li> <li>▪ Maintain the mosaic of prairie, seepage lakes, floodplain forest and oak savanna for habitat for rare and special concern species such to provide opportunities for research, education, and ecological interpretation.</li> <li>▪ Maintain and expand prairie and open oak woodland within the management area to provide habitat for native plant and animal species.</li> <li>▪ Designate and restore a prairie and barrens State Natural Area</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A sizable (49 acre) timber sale was conducted on an area that had been severely impacted by oak wilt. The sale removed the dead and dying material as well as some mature jack pine. With the sale complete, a prescribed burn can be conducted to promote regeneration of jack pine and enhance the barrens cover type present in this area.</li> <li>- The previous sale wraps around an 80 acre red pine plantation, which also experience a substantial harvest. The plantation had exhibited signs of decline, so those areas were removed. Cut acreage within the plantation was roughly half, generating over \$140,000 in revenue. The remaining acreage will be removed within the next 10 years. At that point, the entire former plantation and the surrounding barrens will be managed as one large barrens unit.</li> </ul>

## **Native Community Management Area –Red Cedar River Cliffs and Forest**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Develop and maintain an older, closed canopy forest with emphasis on long lived tree species where those species comprise the primary cover type.</li><li>▪ Enhance forest structural diversity and development of old growth characteristics such as large diameter trees, standing dead snags, and coarse woody debris.</li><li>▪ Protect water quality through protection and maintenance of wetland habitats and seeps.</li><li>▪ Protect the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the site.</li><li>▪ Support scientific research that is compatible with the ecological and aesthetic attributes of the site.</li><li>▪ Protect the archeological features from further disturbance and degradation.</li></ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Little management occurred on this portion of the Dunnville Wildlife Area in 2012</li></ul>

## Public use management and development

<p><b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stock pheasants on sites with suitable cover to provide increased opportunity for harvest during the pheasant hunting season.</li> <li>▪ Maintain 20 existing parking areas throughout the property.</li> <li>▪ Maintain primitive roads to provide foot access throughout the property.</li> <li>▪ Monitor the erosive actions of the Chippewa River at the end of Dunnville Road and consider closing/abandoning the parking area at the end of the road.</li> <li>▪ Establish a primitive road to provide access to Nine Mile Island.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accomplishments 2012</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1000 pheasants were stocked throughout the Dunnville Wildlife Area; 840 from the State Game Farm in Poynette and 160 from the Dunn County Fish and Game Association Day-old-chick program. 2012 was the first year that hunting was allowed before 2 p.m. on the weekends during the 2 p.m. closure time period. The pheasant stocking program continues to provide a great deal of hunting opportunity on the Dunnville Wildlife Area.</li> <li>- 20 parking areas were maintained through a variety of methods, including mowing, grading, adding fill, maintaining existing fence, and replacing dilapidated fence with boulders.</li> <li>- A primitive road system was again maintained throughout the Dunnville Wildlife Area. The primary objective for this activity is to facilitate pheasant stocking and, in some cases, help establish fire breaks. The road system is also used extensively by recreationalists to access various parts of the property.</li> <li>- Following extensive flooding events on the Chippewa River in 2011, a decision has been made to abandon the existing parking area at the end of Dunnville Road. Conservation Infrastructure funding will be used to construct a new parking area approximately 100 yards north of the existing lot. The road will be blocked off at the location of the new lot; the new lot will hold at least 30 vehicles, designed to meet the summer day-use needs.</li> <li>- The establishment of a primitive road to provide access to Nine Mile Island has been explored. At this point there is not enough clarity on the riparian ownership rights to move ahead with an access at the intended location. This endeavor may be on hold until additional potential access points are acquired.</li> </ul>

**Property:** Big Swamp Wildlife Area

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### **Resource management, development and protection**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Restore the hydrological function and ecological integrity of a larger block.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Little management occurred at Big Swamp Wildlife Area in 2012.</li></ul>

### **Native Community Management Area –Bear Creek Tamarack Relict**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain tamarack swamp and bog relict habitat following the general prescriptions found later in this section.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Little management occurred at Big Swamp Wildlife Area in 2012.</li></ul>

### **Public use management and development**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Develop public parking areas when suitable lands are acquired.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No suitable land to develop a parking area was acquired at Big Swamp Wildlife Area in 2012.</li></ul>

**Property:** Nine Mile Island State Natural Area

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## **Resource management, development and protection**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain the bottomland hardwoods, prairies, and oak savanna/woodland to provide habitat for rare and special concern species.</li><li>▪ Provide opportunities for research, education, and ecological interpretation.</li><li>▪ Maintain and develop structural and functional attributes of old forests including biologically mature trees, large diameter trees, large snags and coarse woody debris.</li><li>▪ Provide closed canopy or near closed canopy to benefit area sensitive species.</li><li>▪ Develop aesthetic qualities of old forest habitat.</li><li>▪ Protect scenic and aesthetic qualities of the Chippewa River.</li></ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- On the mainland portion of the SNA, prescribed burns took place on 2 sites totaling 17 acres. These recent seedlings received their first burns since planting occurred. The burns adequately stimulated the plantings.</li><li>- During the emergency haying and grazing act, a 24 acre site was clipped by a local farmer for hay. A portion of this site (about 6 acres) had alfalfa on it. This particular area was seeded as part of a restoration, but the alfalfa was not killed and has since had a competitive advantage over the native seed.</li></ul>

## **Public use management and development**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Establish a primitive access road for SNA management purposes across Dunnville WA.</li><li>▪ Maintain 3 parking lots.</li><li>▪ Maintain a carry-in boat access site.</li></ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The opportunity to establish and access from Dunnville to Nine Mile Island was explored in 2012. At this point there is not enough clarity of riparian ownership and associated rights to move forward with the access. We may have to acquire additional acreage in order to develop an access between the mainland and the island.</li><li>- Maintenance has occurred on 3 parking areas, primarily through mowing and grading as well as occasional trash cleanup. In addition, Conservation Infrastructure funding was secured in 2012 for the development of 2 additional parking lots, which will be located off of County Hwy M. These lots will be constructed in the spring of 2013.</li><li>- A carry-in boat access has been developed and is generally maintained by Pepin County. Guard rails have been installed immediately adjacent to the walk way to prevent parking on the roadway and vehicle passage on the walkway itself.</li></ul>

**Property:** Caryville Savanna State Natural Area

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**Resource management, development and protection**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain the savanna to provide habitat for rare and special concern species and to provide opportunities for research, education, and ecological interpretation.</li></ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Passage of motorized equipment onto Brush Island is not possible. Management has consisted of prescribed burning on a 2-year rotation and occasional work days by volunteer groups to cut and treat invasive species such as buckthorn.</li><li>- The savanna portion of the island was burned in 2012. Steady progress has been made as we attempt to hold back succession to invasive species including buckthorn and prickly ash.</li></ul>

**Property:** Rock Falls Wildlife Area

### **Resource management, development and protection**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Create and maintain a large block of grassland to support grassland SCGN species and protect associated ecological values.</li><li>▪ Protect the water quality of Rock Creek.</li><li>▪ Manage for mature oaks and white pines where each is the primary cover type.</li><li>▪ Manage water levels in the impoundments for waterfowl, marshbirds and shorebirds.</li><li>▪ Provide winter food plots for wildlife.</li></ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- For management purposes, the property is divided into east and west halves, with Rock Creek being the dividing line. In 2012, the west side of the property was burned. The burn successfully set back brush growth. Refugia was maintained on the east side of the property, which will be burned in 2013.</li><li>- Drought conditions through the summer and early fall of 2012 led to an un-voluntary drawdown of the large impoundment. Only about 10% of the flowage surface area had water on it by the end of summer. While this was undoubtedly very good for the shorebirds, species needing deeper water were displaced.</li></ul>

### **Public use management and development**

<b><i>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain 2 parking areas on the periphery of the property.</li><li>▪ Primitive trails provide foot access throughout the property.</li><li>▪ Develop new parking areas as public lands are acquired.</li></ul>
<b><i>Accomplishments 2012</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Two parking areas were maintained, one at each end of the property, primarily through mowing and grading. The steel pipe gate on the west end parking area was damaged through vandalism and was replaced with a cable gate.</li></ul>

**Property:** Waterville Extensive Wildlife Habitat Area

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### **Resource management, development and protection**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Prevent woody succession in the grasslands.</li><li>▪ Prevent reed canary grass encroachment.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A prescribed burn was conducted on the largest (27 acres) opening on this property. Most of the opening had been mowed the summer prior, making the prescribed burn essential to top-kill the new growth from the cut stems.</li></ul>

### **Public use management and development**

<b>MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain 1 parking area on the periphery of the property.</li><li>▪ Primitive trails provide foot access on the property.</li></ul>
<b>Accomplishments 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- One parking area was maintained on this site, providing a public access point on this isolated property.</li></ul>